

SENATOR NEWELL: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I don't want to take a great deal of time and I don't want to pick on Chadron State College or the Activities Center out there but I do want to say that we do have a process, it is called the budget process, and from time to time while we may scrutinize and criticize and analyze their work, it probably has served this state well that we have that process. Senator Cullan's desire here to earmark the funds I think is wrong. It is bad policy decision. I think that this capital construction project like every other one should stand the scrutiny and the analysis that the appropriations process provides and gives because someone has to be responsible for assessing the basic needs of the state and determining certain criteria and it is not with any great malice towards Senator Cullan or any malice towards Chadron or the panhandle that I offer this amendment. It is really one of those concerns that I believe is strongly process oriented. I would say that I also would hate to see this bill...this amendment not be discussed on its true and honest and sincere basis. The grounds should not be whether you are for Senator Cullan, for Chadron State, for this project, but if you decide to put a tax on the tobacco industry, we ought to discuss whether that tax is worth putting on, whether it is continually overly burdensome to the industry, et cetera, and I think this will clarify the issue very greatly for most members of the Legislature. In these hard economic times, those dollars ought to go to the general fund and next year Senator Cullan can then fight in the legislative process to change those...the direction of those dollars, if he can get this tax on. I am not sure that it is a good policy decision in any regards but I think we ought to separate the tax from the gym, and with that in mind, I would urge the Legislature to support my amendment.

PRESIDENT: Senator Higgins, do you wish to speak to this amendment to the amendment?

SENATOR HIGGINS: No, sir, on the bill.

PRESIDENT: Is there further discussion on the Newell amendment? Yes, Senator Cullan.

SENATOR CULLAN: Mr. President, members of the Legislaure, I concur with the philosophical statement that Senator Newell has made with respect to the funding of the Activities Center. It is just that I have been having one heck of a time getting this little building built and it has been the number one priority of Chadron State College since 1977 which is incidentally the year that I came into the Legislature